

IN THE DRAWINGS

The attached sheet of drawings includes changes to Figs. 9A and 9B. This sheet, which includes Figs. 9A and 9B, replaces the original sheet including Figs. 9A and 9B. In both Figs. 9A and 9B, -- (Prior Art) -- has been added.

Attachment: Replacement Sheet

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-2, 4, and 6-21 are presently pending. Claims 3 and 5 have been canceled without prejudice. Claims 1, 4, 6, 9, and 12 have been presently amended. Claims 17-26 have been presently added. No new matter has been added.

In the Office Action, the drawings and specification were objected to. Claims 1-3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Sugano et al (JP 01-169103). Claims 4-8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sugano et al in view of Yamanashi (JP 2004-9121). Claims 9 and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sugano et al in view of Wentworth Jr. (U.S. Pat. No. 3,731,595). Claim 10 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sugano et al in view of Wentworth Jr. and in view of Yamanashi. Claims 12-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sugano et al in view of Matsunaga et al (U.S. Pat. Appl. Publ. No. 2003/0053893).

Regarding the drawing objection, filed herewith are Replacement Drawing Sheets on which the label -- Prior Art -- has been added. Thus, the objection to the drawings has been overcome.

Regarding the specification objection, the issue identified in the Office Action has been addressed. Thus, the objection to the specification has been overcome.

Claim Summary: Claim 1 as clarified defines:

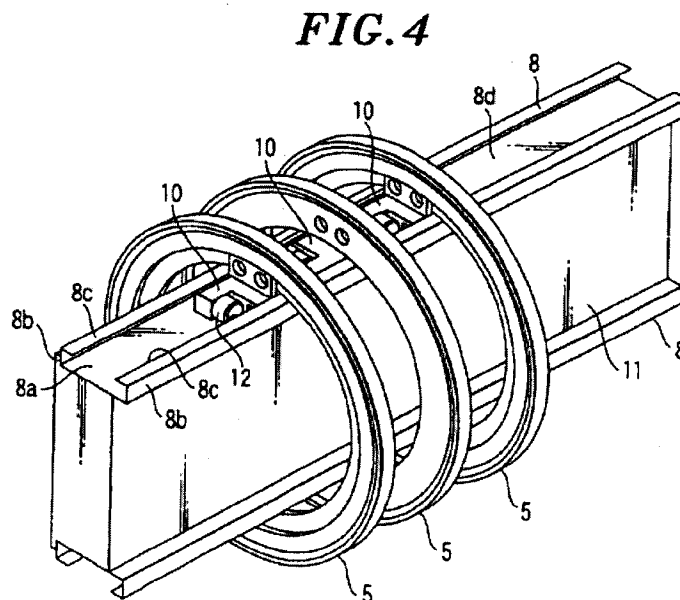
1. An inner supporting structure of a bellows, the structure comprising:
 guiding tracks installed in the bellows, extending along an axial
direction of the bellows;
 moving members slidably installed on the guiding tracks along the
axial direction *and in the bellows*; and

intermediate supporting members for coupling the moving members and the bellows.

wherein the moving members include moving blocks movably installed on the guiding tracks without being allowed to derail therefrom, respectively, and

wherein the moving members include rollers axially supported on the moving blocks so as to slide on the guiding tracks. [Emphasis added.]

Accordingly, Claim 1 has been amended to include the features of original Claims 3 and 5, and to indicate that the moving members are installed in the bellows. As generally described in the specification and as now defined in Claim 1, since the guide tracks are installed in the bellows and since the moving members are installed on the guiding tracks, the moving members are also installed in the bellows.¹ Similar amendments have been made to independent Claim 12. A depiction of one illustration of the claimed invention is shown in Applicant's Figure 4 which shows a perspective view of moving blocks 10 installed on rail 8 (e.g., a guiding track), the whole assembly being inside the bellows 1 (not shown in Figure 4, but apparent from Figures 1 and 3).

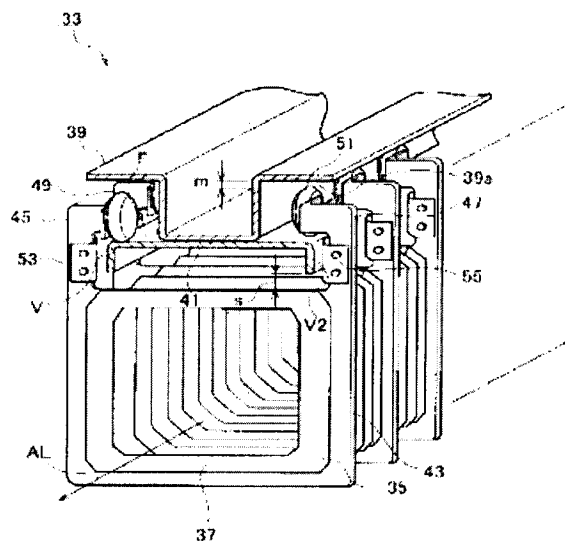


¹ The same support applies for amended claim 12. Newly added Claims 17 and 21 are supported by page 12, line 10 to page 13, line 11 of the specification. The other amended or added claims are based on original claims.

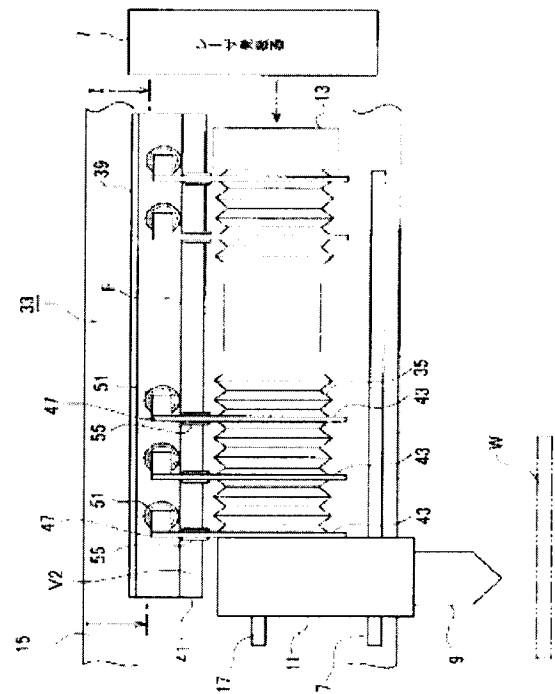
Art Deficiencies: The Office Action associates the shape-maintaining guide 29 of Sugano et al with the claimed moving members. However, the shape-maintaining guide 29 of Sugano et al moves to thereby move the bellows 26 and 27 laterally. Moreover, for the shape-maintaining guide 29, the supporting axes 22 and 23 are inserted into guide holes 30. There is no disclosure or suggestion in Sugano et al of the rollers recited in Claim 1.

Indeed, Yamanashi was cited in the Office Action in rejecting original Claim 5 which recited rollers axially supported on the moving blocks so as to slide on the guiding tracks. The Office Action identified element 51 of Yamanashi as corresponding to the claimed rollers. Figures 1 and 3 of Yamanashi are reproduced below on the next page and show that rollers 51 as well as first and second roller 47 and 49 of Yamanashi are located or installed outside the bellows 35.

【 図 1 】



【 図 2 】



Thus, Yamanashi fail to disclose or suggest moving members slidably installed on the guiding tracks along the axial direction and in the bellows, and including rollers axially supported on the moving blocks so as to slide on the guiding tracks, as defined in Claim 1. Moreover, the construction in Yamanashi with the rollers outside bellows 37 *teaches away* from the claimed invention.

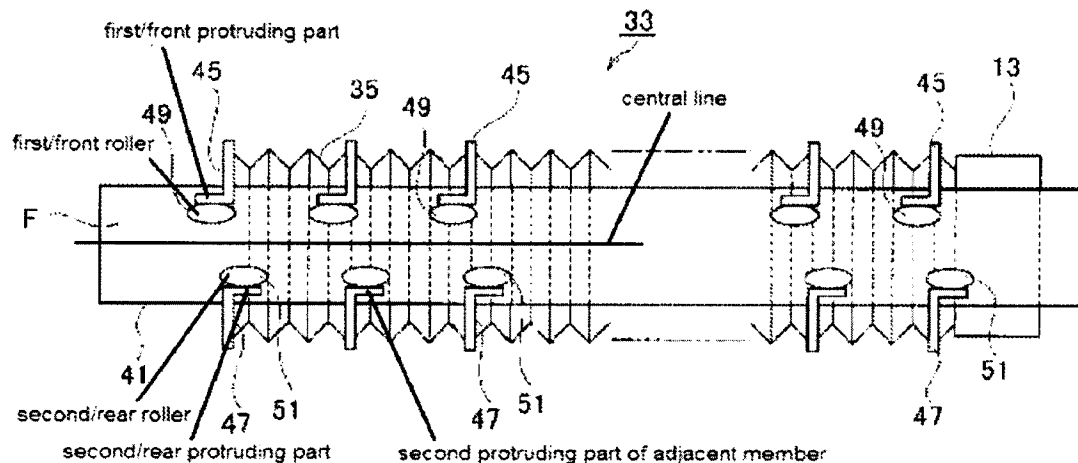
Therefore, given the deficiencies in the art and the teaching away by Yamanashi, independent Claims 1 and 12 patentably define over the art of record, and should (with the dependent claims therefrom) passed to allowance.

Dependent Claims 8 and 18: Claim 8 (depending from Claim 1 and Claim 6) defines:

the rollers (*included with the moving members inside the bellows*) include a first and a second roller respectively provided at a front and a rear portion of each of the moving blocks, and the first and the second roller are alternately positioned with respect to a *central line of the moving blocks* extending in the axial direction (*of the bellows*); and wherein the protruding parts include a first and a second protruding part provided at a front and a rear portion of each of the moving blocks, and the first and the second protruding part are alternately arranged with respect to the central line, the first and the second protruding part of two adjacent moving members being positioned on an opposite side with respect to the central line (*of the moving blocks*) [Annotations added in parentheses.]

Further, by the dependence of Claim 8 on Claim 6, the adjacent moving members (being positioned on an opposite side with respect to the central line of the moving blocks) contact the protruding parts.

The Office Action relies on Figure 3 of Yamanashi, reproduced below from the Office Action's annotated copy, in associating elements 45 and 47 of with the claimed first and the second protruding parts.



Firstly, the examiner is reminded that, as noted above, the rollers 47 and 49 of Yamanashi are positioned outside the bellows 37. Secondly, as emphasized above, Claim 8 defines that the protruding parts are positioned on the opposite side with respect to the central line of the moving blocks. Yet, the Office Action indicates a central line for the bellows, not a central line of moving blocks, as its basis of rejecting Claim 8. Under this distinction, Applicant submits that Claim 8 and likewise Claim 18 define over Yamanashi.

Dependent Claims 17 and 21: Wentworth Jr. was cited in the Office Action for its teaching of elements 48, 50, 56, and 58, which the Office Action associates with the hooks defined in Claim 11. See page 6 of the Office Action.

Newly added claim 17 defines that the claimed hook is slidably supported in the groove portions and is engaged by the claimed snags. Applicant submits that this configuration is not disclosed or suggested by Wentworth Jr., and therefore, new Claims 17 and 21 patentably define over the art of record.

Conclusion: In view of the present amendment and in light of the above discussions, the outstanding grounds for rejection are believed to have been overcome. The application as amended herewith is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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